

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Ronal W. Serpas



Office of the State Fire Marshal *State Fire Marshal Mary Corso*

Captain Glenn Cramer
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wa.gov>

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For Immediate Release
Contact: Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Anjela Foster
(360) 753-0493

State Fire Officials Concerned with Fireworks and Current Fire Conditions

Due to current fire conditions throughout the state, Washington State fire service and licensed fireworks industry leaders are requesting voluntary restricted use of fireworks this 4th of July. Ongoing drought conditions have caused grasses and other vegetation to be extremely dry and vulnerable to fire, and pose a heightened risk to fire.

With numerous red flag warnings being posted throughout Washington over the weekend due to hot, dry conditions, safety officials are urging citizens to attend public displays performed by licensed, permitted, professional pyrotechnicians. Officials request citizens restrict their use of consumer fireworks to 5 p.m. - 11 p.m. on July 3rd and from 9 a.m. to midnight on July 4th. This voluntary restriction does not apply to the sale of fireworks, licensed permitted pyrotechnic displays, public displays, or communities with more restrictive ordinances or bans.

State Fire Marshal Mary Corso advises, "The current weather conditions have led to an increase in fire incidents throughout the state as a result of fireworks. With sales starting Saturday, June 28, Washington has already experienced numerous fireworks-related fires and injuries."

David Lynam, president of the Washington State Association of Fire Marshals, states, "We are very concerned with the current weather conditions and the dangers that consumer fireworks present not only to personal safety, but the very real fire threat they pose to our communities and the wildland areas of our state. We urge everyone to leave fireworks in the hands of professionals and to go and enjoy one of the more than 100 firework displays offered across the state this year."

"This holiday weekend, please be especially careful when building and extinguishing campfires, and when using motorized vehicles, chain saws, and other equipment that emits potentially flammable sparks," added Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland, who manages the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Sutherland also encouraged forest visitors to check DNR's fire information web site to determine the wildfire risk rating of locations they plan to visit (www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/adm/comm/fireinfo.html).

With temperatures dropping over the next few days, fire officials would like to caution citizens that many hazards still exist, and that fire dangers are still very high.

Information on public displays occurring throughout the state is available on the Washington State Patrol Web page at www.wsp.wa.gov. Click on the 4th of July Celebrate Safely icon.

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0493.

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